

RURAL DISTRICT OF WINSLOW.

Medical Officer of Health's Report.

1904.

EDWIN J. FRENCH, PRINTER, WINSLOW.

To the Winslow Rural Sanitary Authority.

Winslow, February, 1905.

GENTLEMEN,

I usually commence my Annual Report with comments on the statistical tables. There were 97 deaths; the average for the previous ten years was 113, which shows a healthy state of the District. In estimating the deaths too, one must remember that the Workhouse for the last few years receives 50 or 60 aged paupers from London, which helps to swell the mortality list; four should be subtracted from the 97 on account of this. The Infant mortality 7, is most satisfactory, it averages 18, and I have known it over 30 in one year since my tenure of office. The difference is enormous in such a small population. Out of the seven, two deaths were the illegitimate offspring of imbeciles. Table IV indeed is altogether cheering.

Only seven died under one year, six between one and five, one between five and fifteen, two between fifteen and twenty-five, twenty-one under sixty-five, and the rest aged; indeed three were over ninety, one 97.

Phthisis and Heart Disease claimed most victims; six were registered from Cancer. The Zymotic deaths were three—one each from Scarlatina, Diphtheria, and Whooping Cough; none from Measles.

There were 150 births. The birth-rate may be compared with the death-rate. Where does the surplus population go to? why, as in all rural districts, they flock to the towns, attracted by the gas lights as moths fly to a candle, and to the majority their end is much the same. No wonder one hears so much about the unemployed in the large centres.

The Local Government Board require more statistics every year. This time five extra concerning the Factories Act have to be sent to various bodies. I enclose one to the Sanitary Authority. The Factory Act chiefly affects us with regard to the Bakehouses, of which there are many in the District. There are no underground Bakehouses. It has been the custom to white-wash them once a year, more or less, now twice a year is the minimum. I did not find any instances of insanitary conditions; they are not models, but that one scarcely expected. It is certainly most essential, however unpretentious the building, that everything connected with baking should be clean, and that the Sanitary Authority will enforce. The Inspector and I have seen them all.

There are two Laundries and two Tailoring Establishments, with one Bootshop or so, which come under the Workshop Act, but all the others come under journeyman traders. There is a small Brush manufactory in Drayton, kept in excellent condition. There are no House workers to come under the Act.

I need not again refer to the *Water Supply*, this is the same as previously reported. Possibly a public supply may come to Winslow eventually, but we have enough on hand now with the Sewage Works. The connections of the *Sewage* have not been made, but have been commenced, and will be finished this year it is hoped.

There have been further extensions of the Public Sewer at Stewkley.

Table III. With regard to the details of *Zymotic Disease* :—

Scarlet Fever. In February, two children were reported in Nash as disquimating after Scarlatina. No other cases were reported.

In August, there were three children reported as ill with Scarlatina in Claydon. There is reason to believe that milder cases had occurred before which had not been reported.

In October, Scarlatina again broke out at Stewkley, the scene of previous epidemics. This place is acquiring an unenviable notoriety. Stewkley is a long straggling Village, more in touch with London and other Towns than the rest of the District. In times past it has been crowded with pigstyes and farm yards most inadequately drained. These conditions have been much improved. There is no large land owner, but many little proprietors owning many wretched cottages ; some of these have been closed of late years. Such a condition as one finds at Stewkley would have been impossible if the property had been under one owner, who, if necessary, could be called to account—then generally a big man takes a pride in his property and would be ashamed of owning hovels.

There was one fatal case from Scarlatina, the only one from this cause in the District. Altogether 9 cases were notified at the time. I detailed the precautions taken.

The woman who had one child burnt, another scalded, and one taken ill with Scarlatina, and who also had a baby a day old, was made a sensational case of in the London papers, and we removed the infected child as you know to the Nurses' home. She was taken ill and required another nurse to attend to her and the child ; these and other expenses you met when desired.

Two children of a widow suffered from the same complaint in the contiguous Village of Mursley, but there is never so much difficulty in stamping out an epidemic in any other Village as Stewkley.

Measles. There was an outbreak in May of Measles, which affected the whole Village of Whaddon, introduced by children from London ; no fatal cases ensued.

Diphtheria. There was one case, ending fatally.

Typhoid Fever. Again we have no case recorded ; this fact is often adduced as evidence that the water supply is not impure, but we know that some of it is not up to the mark.

There have been five new houses erected this year. Two houses have been repaired and put in order as they were not up to the requirements of the Act. I think that the Inspector and I know the District thoroughly, we have frequently visited it during the year, including the Butchers' Shops and Farms. I consider the whole District is in a fairly sanitary condition.

Yours faithfully,

T. F. VAISEY,

Medical Officer of Health.

